



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

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Romania

Poultry and Products

Update on Import Requirements on MDM 2003

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Report Highlights:

A recent regulation on mechanically deboned meat (MDM) has been significantly modified. The test for Salmonella will be less strict and no specific Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) export health certificate will be required. US traders will continue to export in Romania with the current poultry export certificate. The new regulation is effective January 6, 2003.

Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Sofia [BU1], RO

Bucharest –The Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Food has issued a regulation that significantly alters a previous rule that threatened to cut off all U.S. exports of Mechanically Deboned Meat (MDM). The original rule, (Romanian Order no. 333/2002) was to become effective, January 7, 2003 and required FSIS to certify a microbiological test on all MDM exported to Romania. The new rule rescinds this requirements and will permit MDM to be exported to Romania with the existing poultry certificate.

The main provisions of the new regulation are:

1. There will be no request of a specific FSIS Health Certificate for MDM imports; MDM will be accepted based on the FSIS Health Certificate for Fresh Poultry meat, currently in use.
2. MDM may only be used for treated under heat meat products in veterinary authorized processing plants which own technical equipment able to show the graphical registration of temperature and time length of the heat treatment applied. The equipment has to be able to show the heat graph for the whole variety of obtained products.
3. The test for Salmonella will be less strict, since it will be tested in a sample of 25 grams, compared to 5 samples of 1 g, as it was stated in original regulation. (The test remains, however, inconsistent with scientific principles, since it requires a micro-biological test on a raw product that will further processed and cooked at high temperatures.)

Since the main factors that would substantially U.S. exports have been removed, the Romanian market will continue to be open for U.S. exporters.

The original regulation, if applied, would have substantially affected MDM production and imports in Romania. A Health Certificate for MDM would have been required to accompany MDM imports and every MDM lot would have had to meet strict microbiological requirements. As an answer to an AgBucharest request to amend the regulation, the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Food issued the new regulation on January 6 (Order no. 655/2002).